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ABSTRACT

Based on the visit of an international team studying the education and cultural development of migrants, this report describes school re-integration for children of Greek migrants returning to their home country. Part 1 outlines the purpose and itinerary of the three-day visit. Part 2 characterizes Greece as having a long and complex tradition of migration and gives numbers of Greeks emigrating abroad and returning since 1968. Brief descriptions are provided for state programs that deal with employment needs, encourage research on the impact of migration, and sponsor summer camps for Greek children living abroad. Part 3 covers the visit to an experimental project serving 53 children of migrants in nine back-up classes--small groups meeting four to five hours weekly after regular school hours. The goals of the three-year project are described--a study to identify problems encountered by migrant students, development of teaching materials, and in-service training for back-up class teachers. Part 4 provides a general evaluation of the visit and makes recommendations concerned with provision for the linguistic knowledge of emigrants' children, cooperation of back-up class and regular teachers, in-service teacher training strategies, and parent involvement in school activities. (JHZ)

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The CDCC's Project No. 7:

"The education and cultural development of migrants"

THE SCHOOL RE-INTEGRATION OF THE CHILDREN OF GREEK EMIGRANTS IN THEIR PARENTS' COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

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The CDCC's Project No. 7:
"The education and cultural development of migrants"

THE SCHOOL RE-INTEGRATION OF THE CHILDREN OF GREEK EMIGRANTS IN THEIR PARENTS' COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Report of the visit by experts from
Project Group No. 7
by Ms Micheline Rey

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe or its Secretariat.

Strasbourg
1985

1. INTRODUCTION

The visit to Athens and Ioannina in connection with the school re-integration of the children of Greek emigrants in their parents' country of origin was the fourth and final visit made in the framework of CDCC Project No. 7 on the education and cultural development of migrants. The visits were chosen in terms of their subjects' relevance to the objectives of Project No. 7. Firstly, we wanted to see what was actually being done, bearing in mind the three aspects which the Project Group regarded as fundamental and had agreed to single out for study, in connection with the integration, education and cultural development of migrants:

- the relationship of school to family,

- the relationship of school to the culture of the community,

- the cultural development of adults, especially women.

To this end, two visits were made to host countries: the first, in 1981, to the Coventry community education projects (United Kingdom); and the second (third of four), in 1983, to see the work being done in connection with the education of migrant children in Vienna and Lower Austria.

We also wanted to learn about, and publicise (two further visits), the projects - very few as yet, and beset by numerous obstacles - being carried out in "countries of origin" in conjunction with the re-integration of returning migrants with particular reference to the awareness of the diversity of cultural experiences of the different groups involved and existing and potential relationships among the various authorities.

The first of these visits (second of four), in 1982, was to the Coimbra community awareness project (Portugal), and the second (fourth of four) to the Greek project discussed in this report.

The following experts, all members of Project Group No. 7, took part in the visit to the Greek project on the school re-integration of the children of emigrants: MM Bertil Jakobsson (Sweden), Andreas Karagiorges (Cyprus), John Singh (United Kingdom), Ms Annamaria Trusso (Council of Europe Secretariat) and myself (Switzerland). Two others who were to be with us were prevented from coming at the last minute. The trip was arranged by Mr George Markou (University of Athens), also a member of Project No. 7, who was with the group throughout our stay in the country.

The programme was as follows:

Wednesday 8 May 1985 in Athens:

- Welcome address by officials from the Ministry of Education; comments on the project context.

- Presentation of the project for the school re-integration of the children of Greek migrants returning to their home country (G. Markou)

- Report on vocational training for the children of Greek migrants (A. Patoucha)

- Report on Greek emigration and return commissioned by the Ministry of the Economy (Mr Defigou)

- Statement on "Greek migrants' children: a socio-psychological approach" (Mr Deceou)

- Statement on "Teaching Greek to returning migrants' children" (Mr Tchile)

- Visit to "Frontistiriaka tmimata" (back-up course) for migrant children (lower secondary) and discussion with pupils and teachers

Thursday 9 May 1985 at Ioannina:

- Statement on Greek and German in relation to returning migrants' children (A Gotovos and M Fehring)

- Visit to a vocational training centre (OAED)

- Visit to "Frontistiriaka tmimata" (back-up course) at primary level and discussion with pupils and teachers

Friday 10 May 1985:

- Visit to the archaeological site on Dodona, return to Athens and visit to the Acropolis.

The people running the project said on several occasions that the project was still in its infancy and that they were counting on this visit to provide fresh ideas and suggestions for its further development.

On the basis of the information provided, thus, this report will describe the school integration project and some other efforts being made by the Greek government to facilitate the re-integration of young or adult migrants, and set out the suggestions put forward during exchanges between the experts and people involved in the project. In drafting it, I have also used short evaluation reports written by the experts on their return, along with their proposals. The object of this report is therefore twofold: to inform others about the situation in Greece and the efforts being made to meet needs there, and, if possible, to contribute to the further growth of these efforts.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

2.1 A few figures

Greece has a very long tradition of migration, which accelerated towards the end of the last century. By the turn of the century a steady stream of Greek emigrants was flowing in the direction of far off countries, the United States, Canada and Australia in particular. After the Second World War and the civil war many political refugees settled in socialist countries; then came the flood of "migrant workers" into the industrialised countries of Europe, especially the Federal Republic of Germany. But the flow of inward-bound immigrants has also been substantial, although no statistics of this were kept before 1968. The figures now available indicate that between 1968 and 1977 (January-September), 221,244 Greek emigrants returned home, an average of 22,000 each year. To illustrate the complexity of these migratory

movements, between January and September 1977 (the only year for which the project has detailed figures) over 16,500 Greeks emigrated abroad. 62% of them were men, 38% women. 22% were under 20 years of age. Their destinations were as follows: Federal Republic of Germany, United States, other countries of Europe, Asia and other parts of the world. The emigrants originated mainly in Northern Greece, Athens and the Peloponnesos, other regions being affected to a lesser degree. During that same period over 12,500 Greek emigrants returned to the country. Of these 53% were men, 47% women and 21% people under 20 years of age. They came from the Federal Republic of Germany and other countries of Europe, the United States, other parts of the world and Asia, and they settled primarily in northern Greece, the Athens region and Thessaly, followed by other regions.

The tables below, based on the figures in the Greek statistical yearbook for 1978, give details.

In 1977

"Permanent" emigration from Greece / Returning Greek emigrants

No.	Destination / Provenance	No.
3,027	United States	903
505	Canada	659
625	Australia	454
1,685	Other distant countries (of America, Africa and Asia)	682
7,274	Federal Republic of Germany	7,770
1,988	Other European countries	1,266
739	Other Mediterranean countries (Africa and Asia)	200
667	Not available	638
16,510	Total	12,572

In 1977

"Permanent" emigration from Greece / Returning Greek emigrants

No.	Region of emigration / Region of resettlement	No.
3,381	Athens	2,665
752	Remainder of Central Greece and Euboea	345
1,013	Peloponnesos	588
302	Ionian islands	146
683	Epirus	533
721	Thessaly	634

5,029	Macedonia	4,918
1,044	Thrace	936
560	Aegean islands	382
238	Crete	275
2,743	Not available	1,160
16,510	Total	12,572

Migration is very much a part of life in Greece, thus, as regards both the numbers of emigrants whose residence abroad, especially in other parts of Europe, is considered to be temporary, and the numbers of Greek nationals returning to the country. The state seeks to deal with this situation in various ways: by setting up facilities for the reception, training and employment of those coming back to the country, by encouraging research on the extent and impact of migration, by studying the linguistic, educational and social problems of migrants' children and by adopting suitable educational measures both in countries of employment and in Greece.

Mention was made of a number of specific projects and efforts:

2.2 Action of the OAED to facilitate the occupational rehabilitation of migrants

The OAED (Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation/Griechische Organisation für Beschäftigung des Arbeitskräftepotentials) is an organisation to promote the employment of potential manpower, set up under the Ministry of Labour. Its services include job-hunting, running of placement offices, various forms of compensation, vocational guidance, technical training, financial assistance to employers for the creation of new jobs for the groups of workers worst hit by unemployment (young people, building construction and unskilled workers, women etc), a rehabilitation programme for handicapped persons, research, study grants, publications, and they are available to everybody.

Several programmes have been put in hand specifically to facilitate the re-integration of migrants:

- Owing to the problems of adjustment experienced by emigrants' children (language, separation from parents, choice of school or apprenticeship determined more by parents' preferences than by children's interests), the OAED subsidises preparatory schools and reception classes.

- The children of Greek immigrants from Eastern and Western Europe are given first choice of apprenticeships and in accelerated training hostels and OAED hostels. They apply through embassies, where they are assisted by civil servants who also travel with them. If they do not have the necessary qualifications they undergo a period of intensive training, organised in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, until they reach the required level.

- In co-operation with other bodies OAED has set up reception services for migrants at Athens and Salonica; these agencies provide information on employment possibilities in the different regions of Greece, look for suitable jobs, stimulate and develop vocational training programmes for migrants, and guide them through the maze of administrative formalities to be completed: insurance, training, family allowance, tax, military service, housing and investments.

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- The Athens and Salonica training centres run special programmes for unemployed migrants and political refugees.

- Various forms of compensation are available to political refugees, returning Greek migrants and their families.

- Through the concerted efforts of several ministries and a number of institutions, subsidies are available for the training or retraining, in relation to the state of the employment market, of returning emigrants wishing to set up firms in Greece.

During their visit to Ioannina the experts visited the OAED technical and vocational training centre of that town and talked to the officials there. At present the centre has training facilities in four areas: mechanics, electrical installation, hydraulics and precision mechanics. There are a large number of applicants, mostly 15-year-old school-leavers or young people 19 or over, which means that two types of programmes are offered. In addition to technical and practical training, general background classes are given to those who are not up to standard. This year the centre has apparently had no pupils of immigrant origin with communication problems, but we were informed that priority would be given to such applicants.

2.3 The Ministry of Economy's research programme on Greek emigration and immigration

This programme, put in hand with support from the Council of Europe Resettlement Fund and in co-operation with other ministries and institutes, began in autumn 1983. Its aim is to examine all aspects of the emigration-immigration process, both causes and effects and from both macro-social and micro-social points of view, and to propose regulations. Some fifty researchers are working on it, not counting those carrying out projects in the field. The areas of study are as follows: economic, social, psychological and demographic questions, the situation of women, the situation of the second generation, regulations. A national enquiry among households affected by migration and a survey of the situation as seen by individuals will enable research hypotheses to be tested, provide fuller knowledge of the relationship between migration (emigration/return) and regional development and the effects of the process on such sub-groups as the second generation, refugees and women. It should be noted, for example, that although women are hardly mentioned in the literature on migration they constitute an active population group which plays a not negligible economic role. In many cases they are primarily agricultural workers who, like the men, have emigrated to work in services or industry, depending on the needs in the country of employment (in distant countries, for example, they may be in domestic service but in the Federal Republic of Germany they tend to work in metallurgy or textiles), and who represent a highly mobile work force. In the course of their migration women have not only changed employment: they have changed roles as well. This research programme will consider them, thus, both as individuals in their own right and as a specific group.

2.4 Research in the University of Salonica on the socio-psychological situation of migrants' children

The bulk of research into the situation of the children of migrants has been carried out in host countries, and in terms of the natives of those countries. The results have been contradictory, inasmuch as the dominant values are not the same. In this case the comparison will be between the

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children of Greeks who have emigrated to the Federal Republic of Germany and those who have been brought up by their parents in Greece. The study involves several groups of children: some have spent their whole lives in Greece with substitute parents (grandparents) while their parents were abroad, others have always lived with their parents in the host country, still others have lived partly in one country and partly in the other, those, in another group who have recently returned to Greece without their parents, and finally, there is a group who have always lived in Greece with their parents.

A questionnaire on the behavioural attitudes of the children has been issued to parents, and the children themselves have been observed with other children. It would seem, from the questionnaire to parents, that those at greatest risk are the ones who have moved recently, whether to rejoin their parents in Germany or to return to Greece with or without parents. As far as the returning children are concerned, however, the problems defined as being those of the children would seem rather to be related to the attitudes of the parents themselves. Direct observation of the children has produced varying results, but would seem to indicate that the children who have moved and, to a lesser degree, those who have lived their whole lives in Germany, may have more difficulties in their relationships with others, and that all children of emigrants are different from children who have always lived in Greece.

2.5 Teaching modern Greek to emigrants' children at summer holiday camps

Every summer the Greek Ministry of Social Affairs runs camps for Greek children living abroad, so that they can become familiar with their parents' home country. They sign up for these camps through the embassies. In August 1984 a team from the University of Salonica and twenty students who had taken a one-year course on foreign language teaching methods organised classes in Greek (15 hrs) in four of the camps, for children aged 9 to 14. The objective was to increase the children's oral and written proficiency so that they could relate more directly to their environment while in Greece. To this end the instructors were given 14 independent language activity modules (to be adapted to children's needs) together with a list of possible linguistic functions and performances. A number of techniques were suggested: games such as those played by the children at camp, constructions, role-play, simulations, all requiring simple and inexpensive materials - paper and coloured pencils, scissors and string, clay, etc. The results, in both linguistic and psychological and educational terms, were considered encouraging and warranted a repetition of the experiment. Intercultural contacts might be developed in this way.

3. THE PROJECT ON THE SCHOOL RE-INTEGRATION OF THE CHILDREN OF EMIGRANTS IN THEIR PARENTS' COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

3.1 Background

Many emigrants' children return to live in Greece and they present a social and educational problem for the country. In the absence of recent statistics a few rather contradictory figures were put forward during the visit. In a report written for UNESCO (1), the project leaders said that

(1) G. Markou and Th. Gotowos: Report on the school re-integration project for the children of Greek migrants, in the regions of Athens and Ioannina; Contract No. 107.005,4, between UNESCO and the Greek National Commission (polycopied).

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about ten thousand school-age children arrive each year from Western Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia, as well as children of political refugees. This figure is not borne out by other estimates in the written material distributed during the visit. It would be useful to have reliable information on this point but it can certainly be said, as G. Markou and Th. Gotowos have done, that "the number of Greek schools affected by incoming migrants' children and the children of political refugees is rising steadily".

In 1980 the state set up reception classes, somewhat like those in the Federal Republic of Germany, to deal with this situation; in addition to the lessons corresponding to the regular curriculum, these classes do special work in German, modern Greek and maths.

This effort seems not to have been a success, so another attempt was made in 1982, in the form of back-up classes ("Frontistiriaka tmimata") in which small groups meet 4-5 hours weekly, after regular school hours. There is a regulation to the effect that when at least two pupils returning from abroad request a back-up class the school is obliged to provide it. The numbers affected by these measures between 1980 and 1985 are shown below.

Year	Reception classes				Back-up classes			
	Primary		Lower secondary		Primary		Lower secondary	
	Classes	Pupils	Classes	Pupils	Classes	Pupils	Classes	Pupils
1980-81	6	82	10	159	-	-	-	-
1981-82	6	76	10	147	-	-	-	-
1982-83	5	88	9	127	32	170	48	264
1983-84	4	54	7	126	371	1,581	121	409
1984-85	4	48	6	118	595	2,900	135	750

Source: Ministry of Education

The school re-integration project for the children of migrants arose out of the researchers' dissatisfaction with the measures available. In their opinion the children in reception classes, which could continue indefinitely, would have fewer opportunities for contact with the ordinary classes and this would hamper the social integration of returning children and their families. Further, the classes were not making any substantial improvement in the pupils' language skills. The back-up classes had been regarded as more flexible and thus better suited to the situation but they too were failing to have the desired results (chiefly for financial reasons). Also, classes took place at the end of the regular school day and the children were tired by them and unable to handle the added demands. Moreover, there was a lack of suitable methods and equipment alike, so that the lessons often did no more than help pupils do their homework for the following day, which was useless unless the child already had a basic grasp of the subject.

In 1983, therefore, G Markou of the University of Athens and A Gotowos of the University of Ioannina decided to make a study of the situation. At the end of the exploratory stage, in which they identified the problems involved

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in the school integration of migrants' children, they obtained help from the Ministry of Education which assigned six teachers to them. With these reinforcements, they set up nine experimental back-up classes involving 53 pupils. Five of these classes (29 pupils) are in the 4th, 5th and 6th years of primary school in the Ioannina region, while the remaining (24 pupils) are in the 7th, 8th and 9th (lower secondary) years of school in Athens. Three of the teachers work in primary education, three in secondary. They were chosen for their experience in teaching migrants, and they attended a two-week seminar run by the project leaders to familiarise them with their new tasks.

At present this project is being operated under a UNESCO contract; in 1984-85 the Ioannina experiment was also selected as a "Council of Europe experimental class" in conjunction with the CDMG programme.

3.2 Objectives, resources and operation of the project

The aim is to try out, and propose to the authorities, action relating to the different aspects of the re-integration process so that schools can pay greater heed to the needs and characteristics of the children of migrants and refugees, help to create greater equality of opportunity for success at school and a more democratic and pluralist school system.

To that end the project adopted the following objectives:

- to look at the conditions in which migrants' children are integrated into the school, the way in which they see themselves, their problems of adjustment, social interaction and communication, their participation in class and their vocational outlook, and the way in which they are seen by teachers;

- to identify, classify and analyse the problems of representation arising during school integration, in conjunction with learning, performance, personal identity and contacts with the school community;

- to adapt and produce new teaching resources for use in back-up and regular classes;

- to produce initial and further training material for teachers and to run in-service training seminars for back-up class teachers;

- to make proposals to the authorities with a view to improving the back-up classes and their co-ordination with regular classes.

To identify the problems, the study worked with the children attending back-up classes, using empirical methods of research: questionnaires, interviews, group discussion. In all, 367 children who returned to Greece between 1980 and 1982 were interviewed, and 65 teachers, most in the Ioannina region. Subsequently, the teachers of the experimental back-up classes were asked, in addition to teaching the class itself, to set up contacts with the teachers of regular classes and with pupils' families, to define the impact of the class on their pupils' behaviour, and also to co-operate in producing and trying out teaching material.

The project is to last three years. The first (1983-84) was devoted to identifying the problems and setting up the experimental classes; the second (1984-85) to the information and further training of teachers - the first

seminar was attended by about 400 teachers and was held in Athens in December 1984 (a report has been published in Greek) - and to the production of teaching aids; and the last (1985-86) should serve to introduce these aids to teachers, encourage them to use them and to work out an approach to this form of teaching in classes not thus far involved in the project.

3.3 Initial results

Those running the project consider that the empirical research and work done in the experimental back-up classes have given them a more highly differentiated and exact knowledge of the process of the integration/re-integration of migrants' children at school. Several points may be mentioned.

There is no such thing as a uniform or even a prevailing biography of migration. All the children's past lives and living conditions have been different and have affected their school integration on their return. Without exception, however, they find the Greek social and school environment inhibiting. Values, standards of behaviour and criteria of scholastic excellence differ. Little room is left for the expression of the values they lived by in the countries from which they have come. There is a sort of "structural deficiency", even for children with no previous problems at school, which results from their isolation and the cultural conflicts within them.

It would seem that only a small minority of migrants' children achieve good results at school. The performance of the majority is below average. The areas in which they have difficulty are language, especially writing, and subjects in which language mastery is important, such as physics, mathematics and chemistry, all of which employ concepts that must be understood exactly.

At the same time it has been found that teachers expect less from children who have been living abroad and think that few of them have much chance of a successful career in more advanced education.

The families, on the other hand, set great store by their children's school and vocational careers and are optimistic about them even where failure is probable. Many parents have a sense of personal failure on their return to Greece; they have not improved their place in society, they cannot find jobs - at fifty, their experience is no use to them, it is the young who are being hired. They have a house and a car and television, but so do the people who stayed behind in Greece, and they, at least, have "saved their children". In these conditions the parents transfer their ambitions to their child and demand that it be a success.

As far as the children are concerned, their performance at school has been found to be linked to their feelings about the return to Greece. Good pupils naturally speak and think well of Greek schools, while those who are having a harder time adjusting criticise them and prefer the ones they attended before. A good many of the pupils would like to go abroad again and are sorry they have returned to Greece.

Language is the principal issue in adjustment to school, but not quite in the ordinary sense. Not all the children were taught Greek, or taught in Greek, abroad, but all or nearly all of them speak it and have no difficulty in communicating. For most, it is their mother tongue. Leaving aside questions of vocabulary, the range of deviation seems to be determined by the country in which they have been living. It is negligible, for example, among children coming from the Federal Republic of Germany. German is the more fragile of

the two languages, showing interferences from Greek (but not the other way around) and a very un-Germanic pronunciation and intonation. This reflects the attitude of the parents who, among the various types of schooling offered in the Federal Republic of Germany (German curriculum with a few hours of Greek each week, (rare) bilingual schools, autonomous Greek schools with lessons in German as second language), tend to prefer the Greek educational model. This is understandable because so many families eventually return to Greece but it poses educational problems because of the isolation and lack of contact with natives that are features of the situation. Deviation is more marked among returning emigrants from Canada, Venezuela, South Africa or Yugoslavia.

The big problem is the written language, at every level of school: reading, spelling, use of verbs, syntax, composition. The syntax of working-class children is elementary (analogy with Bernstein's work), whereas the children of emigrants of higher social status (civil servants, teachers etc) have few problems and the family can step in to help. These children often do not even attend the back-up classes, considering that they do not need them.

There remains the question of dialect. When the parents habitually speak their local dialects, that is what the children speak. Some emigrants' children now speak a dialect from the Epirus which is no longer spoken at all by young people in Greece. The teachers' attitude to this is ambivalent because, owing to the diglossic situation of the country, it poses a political problem. Their first duty is to consolidate the official language ...

Research done thus far has shown that not all children who should be attending the back-up classes are doing so, whether because they did not know about them, thought they did not need them or considered them useless.

The back-up classes do have a serious problem of method to overcome, it is true. Their membership is very mixed and cannot be made less so without grouping pupils from different classes according to level; but in that case it would not be possible to help them to do their homework and make immediate progress, which is the main reason why they bother to attend classes held outside the regular school hours. The team has concluded that the back-up classes are not yet able to cope with all the problems of these children's integration or re-integration at school but that they may have some positive effects in the psychological and social areas: the small numbers, informal atmosphere and individualised attention provide substantial encouragement. From the purely educational and methodological point of view, however, everything remains to be done.

3.4 Visit

During the visits to back-up classes in schools in Athens and Ioannina the experts were able to talk to teachers and pupils and form a first-hand idea of the situation. They were not able, on the other hand, to see the teaching aids produced by the research team.

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Because of the shortage of classroom space the pupils in the schools visited were divided into two groups, which attended either in the mornings or in the afternoons and alternated every week. The back-up classes were held late in the afternoon or evening, when the school was empty and space available.

The children and young people came from countries as dissimilar as the Federal Republic of Germany, Rumania, Ethiopia, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. Their degree of adjustment to life in Greece also differed widely. One girl felt quite at home but conceded that contact was much harder to establish for her coloured classmate. Another child who was born in the Federal Republic of Germany and returned to Greece after nursery school had not adjusted to the return and was psychologically paralysed.

The teacher spoke of some of their difficulties. At the institutional level these are related to the inflexible structure of the system and large numbers of pupils per class (as many as 35 in regular classes), meaning that most teaching was done ex cathedra, and to a lack of equipment: for example, there was no physics or chemistry laboratory in the school so all the lessons were purely theoretical, which surprised children from countries with more money who had experience of working in a laboratory. At the level of personal relations their problems arose from a lack of contact with the teachers of the regular classes, who did not understand their work and had no notion of the position of the children of immigrants or their past experience and linguistic knowledge, unless they had themselves spent time abroad. As far as teaching was concerned, their problems had to do with the heterogeneity of the classes, the lack of teaching resources other than those used by the regular classes and the absence of financial support. The practice of having contacts with families was unknown. Parents wanted their children to progress but thought it was up to the school to see that they did so. Also, a parallel educational system exists and many parents send their children to private schools for extra tuition or pay for tutors to teach them at home.

The teachers are nevertheless aware of the threefold task they are meant to perform, which makes them psychologically a very important link between the two worlds of the child's experience: to develop an intercultural approach to education and revive the non-Greek part of the linguistic and cultural background of immigrants' children so that it will not atrophy; to establish communication with the regular teachers; and to bring the children to a level of proficiency that will enable them to keep up and feel at home in their class.

In this sense, these teachers are leading the way towards a more open style of education, and the emigrants' children are seen as the moving force in this transition. They have fewer nationalist prejudices against foreigners and a more critical perception of reality.

4. CONCLUSION: EVALUATION AND TRANSFER, PROPOSALS

4.1 Evaluation and transfer

Among the case studies and visits carried out by CDCC Project No. 7 on the education and cultural development of migrants, the visit to Greece is unique. It clearly shows, if proof were needed, that problems of the integration of migrants and problems of intercultural relations arise in all

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countries, whether "host" or "of origin", and that appropriate solutions must be found. It is interesting to note that the realisation of the educational problems raised by emigrants' return to Greece and the realisation of the problems raised by the presence of immigrant children in the industrialised countries of Western Europe have moved along similar paths. The first thing to be seen was the linguistic problem, and measures were proposed to deal with that, leading to the setting up of reception classes. Then came a realisation of the importance of the child's social interaction as well as its linguistic competence, giving rise to a search for forms of support and language teaching which did not interfere with school integration. Lastly, the elements of an intercultural and pluralistic education were defined, leading to a network of interactions affecting both the native-born, or nationals remaining in their country of origin, and the immigrants whether in host countries or back in their own country.

Although there is some similarity in the problems, however, and the same guidelines prevail in the search for solutions, contexts differ widely and call for specific analyses and solutions. The Greek project has tackled this aspect of the matter, and this is not the least of its merits. This would appear to be the first time, in Greece, that the university has concerned itself directly with the school integration of emigrant children. The research team has succeeded in asking good questions (without pretending to offer ready-made solutions) and making the state aware of the problem as well as co-operating with teachers, who have become partners in the research.

A few of the circumstances which make it impossible to apply prefabricated or standard recipes to this situation would seem especially worthy of consideration. Firstly, there is the structure, status and equipment of the school system. The distance between the wealth (potential, as it is sometimes poorly distributed or used) of the schools in some industrialised countries and the modesty of the basic equipment of the Greek state schools would seem to be great; and returning children have often been exposed to the former before encountering the latter. Further, it is in this penurious context that demands for additional teaching resources for the back-up courses are being made, because the classes need special teaching materials and approaches. Then too, the perception of the role of the school, of teaching and the teacher-pupil relationship differs from one country to another. Where compartmentalisation is elaborate, in practice or at the institutional level, and where methods are inflexible or impacted, the creation of suitable conditions for an intercultural approach may be presumed to be harder to create, and the corresponding practice harder to establish. Lastly, the plurality of linguistic situations does not have the same form in Greece as it does in host countries, in particular the Federal Republic of Germany, which is often taken as the typical host country. There, emigrants and their children may turn up without knowing a word of the national language - which can justify, in some cases and on certain conditions, the setting up of reception classes, for example (1) - but children returning to Greece do not seem to have any real problems of (linguistic) communication. Presumably, therefore, other reception structures and other measures to facilitate integration will need to be devised.

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(1) Cf our report, Assessment of the method for organising and running experimental classes of the Council of Europe, CAHRS 72 (79) revised.

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The experts considered that the research team have a sensitive awareness of the situation and have adopted a sound approach to the problems, being convinced that the social and school integration and respect for pupils' personalities and past experience are essential, before the children will have the possibility of learning at school.

But although all this is so in theory, much remains to be done to put it into practice. The project is at the beginning of a long process of establishing communication between the various partners in education: the school authorities and regular teachers, the parents, the community and the local authorities who govern it. At present the project is concentrating on its own teachers and back-up classes, whereas it should gradually shift its focus in the direction of the whole school community, beginning with the regular teachers.

4.2 Proposals for improvements or further developments

Certain improvements can be suggested in regard to institutional and teaching questions, co-operation with the regular teachers, teacher-training and relations with parents and the community; some were mentioned by the people involved in the project themselves, in the course of their introductory statements or discussion.

4.2.1 As regards the institutional aspect

Several general questions were raised which concern matters outside the team's field of action but which deserve (re)consideration. These are, in particular:

- conditions of integration of emigrants and their families in the host countries, and the problems of relations and communication with native speakers raised by the existence of separate national education systems;

- problems of equivalence and their implications for the school guidance of children when they return to their home country;

- the difficulties of children returning without their parents and the need to enable families to live together;

- the value of recent statistics on emigrants' return.

Other aspects may be of more immediate relevance to the project team:

- Stress was laid on the need to set up reception centres for returning emigrants and on the lack of resources for this purpose. What chance is there of establishing closer co-operation between the OAED, which apparently provides such centres, and the research team or school administration? In addition to the other services they perform the centres could provide information and advice about schools and schooling; perhaps they might even make the initial contact with the school community.

- As the administration is centralised, the Ministry of Education can play an important part in approving and promoting an intercultural approach. It can issue directives and circulate regulations among the teaching community but also among parents, and facilitate co-operation among the services operating under it.

For example, the regulation on the provision of back-up classes for the children of emigrants does not seem to be very well known and it deserves to be circulated in schools - perhaps in a circular letter drawing teachers' attention to the presence of emigrants' children and calling for their co-operation - and among parents, inter alia through reception centres and the OAED.

4.2.2 As regards teaching

One of the wishes of the research team is that the linguistic knowledge of emigrants' children should be taken into consideration; but bilingual classes such as are organised in Canada or Australia would appear unrealistic. In any event, they would not help these children to become integrated in the school community. The teachers found that the stumbling-blocks met by pupils in different subjects were often caused by language problems. Would it be possible to provide books, encyclopaedias, textbooks etc for them in Greek and in the language of the country in which they were formerly living? If it is not possible to do this in the case of every language, perhaps one might try the experiment for the languages most widely represented. In all likelihood, moreover, the pupils will have a few books at home which they have brought with them. Encouraging them to use these, perhaps to lend them, would help. When this point was being discussed a fear was expressed that the material in such books, eg as regards history, might not be presented in the same way as in Greece. Could this provide an opportunity (in regular classes, rather than in the back-up classes) to introduce an intercultural dimension? The study of reciprocal images - that is, my representation of myself and my culture and of others and their culture (or some of its elements), when placed face to face with others' representations of themselves and their culture and of me and my culture - is one of the strongest types of intercultural teaching.

The number of copies of books in foreign languages need not be too large, if they are purchased for school libraries and made available to individual pupils according to the work they are engaged in or the area of their curiosity. The building up of "intercultural libraries" and, depending on the possibilities, their use by librarians and teachers or even with the co-operation of parents, is also an effective means of confirming the place of different languages and cultures in the school. Such a library should contain both books in Greek showing an approach to other styles of life and culture and books in other languages, or bilingual books, on literary, scientific or leisure-time subjects. They can be borrowed by foreigners, the children of emigrants and refugees, but also by Greeks who have always lived in their own country. This can provide food for thought or spontaneous discussion between pupils having different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Even better, it could provide an opportunity for exchanges organised by the teachers.

Some host countries are beginning to build intercultural school libraries. In co-operation with them it might be possible to find books for children and young people which will also be of interest to Greek schools.

Some attention could be paid, in preparing resources and thinking about methods, to what is known in educational jargon as "authentic documents". This means material which can be used in a class even though it was not designed for educational purposes: newspaper articles, radio or TV broadcasts, administrative questionnaires, curriculum vitae, business letters, operating instructions, instructions on sowing seeds, caring for plants, operating a piece of equipment or appliance or building a scale model, medical prescriptions etc, all of which can supplement the school's resources by connecting instruction to real-life situations. In an intercultural approach, pains will be taken to diversify sources of information. Material of this type can be brought in by teachers, pupils or families, can originate in Greece or elsewhere and can use both Greek and (sometimes several) other languages simultaneously. Two criteria will determine their choice and use: the objective of the lesson and the suitability of the document in terms of content (languages, history, maths, physics, chemistry etc and, more specifically: text comprehension, narration of an event, learning of technical terms, operation of a mechanism etc) is one criterion, and its potential for use in an intercultural approach is the other.

Reception classes have proved inadequate as a means of bringing about the school integration of the children of emigrants, but that does not mean that all forms of intensive remedial work are to be avoided. For example, it might be possible to organise summer camps for children newly returned to the country along the lines of those for children living abroad; intensive remedial work could be done at these, in one or two subjects. Pupils arriving during the school year and having difficulties which their teachers would already have had time to assess might be invited to attend them. One advantage of "summer back-up class" such as this is that children could be grouped by level, the class would have a limited duration and there would be no interference with the school environment of emigrants' children. In addition to periods of intensive work, there would have to be time for leisure and contacts (which can also be educational) so that the children would not find themselves overburdened again (even during the holidays!).

4.2.3 As regards co-operation with regular teachers

When trying to innovate it is important to be able to count on an experienced team capable of planning the innovation and carrying it through, stimulating colleagues' interest in it and ensuring its internal assessment and possibly its dissemination elsewhere. In this sense the formation of a project team in which every member was directly concerned has been an interesting and certainly a fruitful operation. Since one of the project's objectives (and one of the obstacles it has met), however, is to make contact with the teachers who are responsible for the children the rest of the day, it would be a good idea to include some of them in the project team on an equal footing. They could look at and define the difficulties experienced by themselves and their colleagues, discuss the terms of co-operation with back-up class teachers and set it up, try practical experiments in using the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of pupils having lived abroad, experiment with supplementary resources designed to prepare an intercultural approach

and, with the team, evaluate the results. Once the project is in full swing their colleagues, being teachers like them, would lend a more attentive ear.

Also, the effort to find or produce additional teaching resources might not be confined to back-up classes which concentrate on remedial work (although that aspect must not be neglected), but might also relate to the lessons in regular classes as well; if an effort is to be made to accept pupils' values and cultural experience the most effective place to make it, after all, is the environment in which they spend their lives.

4.2.4 As regards teacher-training

Specific training could help to make teachers more sensitive to migration, to the situation of the children of emigrants and refugees returning to the country, to the wealth of their experience and its potential value to the entire school and social community and, lastly, to the importance of intercultural teaching. Ideally, it should take place during their initial training as well as in their in-service training. In this instance, depending on the possibilities, the publication of a brochure or article emanating from the Ministry of Education might be considered, introducing teachers to the circumstances and encouraging them to learn more about them; other possibilities are lectures, study days, short courses for teachers and for the instructors of future teachers. On such occasions a full exchange with people having personal experience of migration - parents, Greek teachers working in host countries, teachers of foreign or emigrant origin - would be valuable.

For example, advantage might be taken of the summer holiday camps organised in Greece by the Ministry of Social Affairs, to acquaint Greek teachers more fully with this population group and set up exchanges of ideas between staff.

4.2.5 As regards relations with parents and the community

Contact and co-operation with parents (or their substitutes) should be intensified in every form - firstly, of course, with the parents of emigrants' children who, having been disturbed by the move, are in greater need of security, which can be helped by co-operation between school and family; but with all other parents as well, in order to create a core of fellowship among the families.

It can be helpful to the child's work at school, for example, and for its relations with its parents, if the parents are aware of what has been done in class and if they are asked to co-operate in the preparation of homework. Also, parents' involvement in some school or class activities can have positive value for both parents and children and be enriching for all pupils. Depending on the children's ages, this might entail the lending by parents of books written in foreign languages with which they are familiar, or contributing to a lesson by giving a talk on some subject of special knowledge, or taking part in operating a library (mentioned before), reading or telling stories to children, or teaching them games or songs from other places.

Beyond this, however, there is the overall community, which is one of the partners in education. Perhaps there are other areas of thought, fellowship and intercultural relations to be explored in which the school's educational concerns could be felt and passed on.

These are only suggestions; their relevance will be decided by the team working on the school integration project for the children of migrants. The question for international organisations, meanwhile, is to decide how much support they can give to the efforts being made by the Greek state to create intercultural understanding, because such support (financial in particular) is very definitely desired.